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TAGS: PREL PGOV PINS PINR IZ

SUBJECT: ALLAWI: IRAQIYYA PARTICIPATING POLITICALLY WITHOUT
REJOINING CABINET

Classified By: Ambassador Ryan C. Crocker for reasons 1.4 (b) and (d).

¶1. (C) Summary: The Ambassador and Special Assistant to the President Brett McGurk met on April 17 with Iraqiyya leader Ayad Allawi and MP Adnan Pachachi. Allawi gave little indication of near-term plans to re-enter the cabinet, but remains involved in the political process by participating in the Political Council for National Security (PCNS), voicing constructive opposition to perceived GOI missteps, and preparing extensively for provincial elections. He espoused repeatedly a vehemently anti-Iran and anti-militia line, and offered positive if vague prescriptions to combat them. End summary.

Iraqiyya Participating In Opposition, Readyng For Elections

¶2. (C) Allawi said he remains involved in the political process through the Political Council for National Security, to which meetings Iraqiyya always sends two representatives, and by preparing for provincial elections. He gave little indication Iraqiyya will rejoin the cabinet anytime soon, offering a peremptory list of preconditions including that the GOI retract accusations against Iraqiyya, reintegrate those subjected to de-Ba thification |, agree on a national unity government, deliver better services and reconstruction aid, and purge the security forces of militia influence. He claimed Kurdistan Regional Government (KRG) President Barzani and to a lesser extent Iraqi President Talabani support his hefty demands, though he gave no indication either plans to act on them. More narrowly, he claimed Iraqiyya cares less about how many ministries it controls than about balancing GOI decision-making through mechanisms like the 3 1 1 and the PCNS, and similarly critiqued the political elite for focusing too much on government formation and not enough on the substance of what that government should do. Pachachi stressed that Iraqiyya's purpose is not to undermine the GOI, but to participate legitimately in the political process and galvanize what they feel is growing popular frustration.

¶3. (C) Allawi is expending considerable effort preparing for provincial elections, specifically by soliciting civil society organizations, unions, women's groups, awakening councils, and tribes to join his secular coalition. Pachachi said Iraqiyya on April 19 would host a conference with roughly 600 attendees from these secular groups, and a larger convention later. Allawi clarified he is reaching out to both Sunni and Shia tribes, for example receiving delegations from Nasiriyah, Samawa, and Diwaniyah this week and from Najaf and Anbar next week. He volunteered that he will solicit financial donations from his "friends" around the region -- presumably the Arab states, which long have looked favorably on Allawi. His preparations notwithstanding, Allawi argued that security is not yet good enough to conduct elections and that party infiltration of Iraqi security forces undermines their reliability in overseeing the elections. The Ambassador noted that our PRTs can help the cross-sectarian civil society organizations Allawi is courting, and asked

about the Communist Party's recent departure from Iraqiyya. Allawi said he was traveling when Iraqiyya asked the Communists to leave and would discuss the matter with Communist leader Hamid Musa, but that more of his focus at the moment is on courting the sahwas and Shia tribes.

Seize the Moment to Fight Iranian Influence and Sectarianism

¶4. (C) Allawi touted a fervently anti-Iranian line throughout the meeting, repeatedly calling Iraq's eastern neighbor its largest problem. He submitted that now is the time to capitalize on growing anti-Iran sentiment. Allawi seconded the Ambassador's support for courting moderate Sadrists, but demanded they clarify their stance toward Iran in light of lethal aid to the JAM. He asserted that his hatred for Iran is mutual, as Tehran fears Allawi will benefit from popular disillusionment with Iranian-stoked sectarianism, and that Iranian agents recently threatened him. Allawi also proposed a tripartite initiative to capitalize on Iraqis' shared exasperation with sectarian militias, consisting of real political reconciliation, the replacement of militiamen in the Iraqi Army (IA) and police (IP), and greater outreach to the Arab states to show them Iraq is not in Iran's pocket. Allawi again claimed Talabani's and Barzani's support for this scheme.

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